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CHILE

MOSCOW, HAVANA SEE ELECTIONS AS TRIUMPH FOR ALLENDE REGIME

Extensive but repetitive Moscow comment and more limited Havana comment on the 4 March Chilean legislative elections have treated the outcome as a triumph for the Popular Unity (UP) government and a vindication of its program. Both Soviet and Cuban media have emphasized that the UP managed the difficult feat of increasing its share of the popular vote over that obtained in the 1970 presidential elections, ignoring the fact that the earlier election was a three-way race while the current contest involved only two major contenders.

Havana and Moscow also stressed that the opposition's effort to obtain two-thirds control of the Chilean Senate—the number required to impeach President Allende—had been thwarted for the most part ignoring pre-election statements by key opposition spokesman emphasizing their goal of a simple majority of the popular vote. Although pre-election comment had noted the opposition's view of the contest as a plebiscite and Allende's denial that this was the case, there was scant reference to this point in postelection comment. Moreover, Moscow and Havana conveniently chose to play down the opposition's continuing control of both houses of congress, while highlighting the UP's increased representation in the two chambers.

MOSCOW
Exultant Soviet reaction to the election was typified by a 5 March TASS commentary by Nikolai Chigir. Hailing the "new major success" by the UP, Chigir noted that the tendency of the party in power in Chile to lose popular support with the passage of time had been reversed by the Allende regime, with the election serving to demonstrate "convincingly" that the government had "considerably gained in strength in two years and four months" in office. Like other Soviet commentators, he alleged that the aim of the "reactionary" opposition was "to seize political power" by gaining two-thirds control of the Chilean Senate and stressed that this goal had been rejected by the electorate. Chigir characterized the outcome as "a victory of the entire Chilean people" who favor "further implementation of the program of revolutionary socioeconomic transformation" paving the way to Chile's "further socialist development."

Pointing out that "this situation cannot be changed," Yu got to the main point of his address with a patriotic pitch: "We are all Chinese. Why couldn't we talk for the sake of the sacred cause of unifying the motherland?" Citing the authoritative example of Mao Tse-tung's trip to Chungking in October 1945 to conduct talks with Chiang Kai-shek, Yu said the two sides should come together and talk, "the sooner the better." Avoiding any specification of PRC terms for the talks, Yu merely asserted that Peking remains open to either formal sessions or informal contacts, and that it would remain silent on the talks if so desired by Taipei. In an effort to reassure ROC officials with "doubts" that they will receive good treatment during the talks and after unification, Yu cited not only his own position despite his past record as a "war criminal" but pointedly mentioned the example of PRC treatment accorded the most famous ROC returnee to the mainland, former ROC President Li Tseng-jen, whom he made a point of calling by his honorific name, Li Te-lin.

PRC media devoted extensive coverage to the 28 February meeting but have thus far not followed up with significant comment. Radio Peking extended its usual 30-minute programs on 1 March to 45 minutes in order to cover the session, while Peking's programs to Taiwan were extended from the usual 15 minutes to 45 minutes. The only subsequent developments related to Taiwan have been a 3 March report describing the arrival in Peking of a former ROC commercial attache in Australia and a 1 March account of a meeting of Chinese residents in Japan which stressed the importance of Taiwan's liberation.

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Although Moscow comment focused on the opposition's failure to gain the two-thirds control of the Senate and on the Paine's made by the regime, a Radio Moscow commentary beamed to Latin America on the 6th recalled the opposition's contention that the elections were "a kind of plumbisite to decide the fate of the popular government" where Allende would have to "quit and make way for the opposition" if the UP obtained less than half of the votes. However, it went on to denigrate the notion as "unconstitutional in its very essence," implying that the government's continuing minority status would not produce a retreatment: "The government led by President Salvador Allende is fully determined to continue realizing its program of radical transformations."

Some Moscow comment observed vaguely that the Chilean electoral results would have a "salutary influence on the political situation elsewhere in Latin America." Thus, a PRAVDA article on the 7th termed the election "a graphic illustration" of the "sufficient" political changes taking place on the continent and concluded that it would be "difficult to overestimate" its impact on "the direction of further development of events in Latin American countries." In similar vein, Radio Moscow the day before predicted that the Chilean balloting would have "broad political repercussions" on Latin American "democratic and progressive circles." The "strengthening" of the government's position, it alleged, was "evidence of the upsurge of the liberation processes," not only in Chile but throughout Latin America.

Despite Moscow's ebullient reaction to the elections, there were some intimations of doubt about the future stability of the Allende regime. A Radio Moscow commentary on the 5th for example, cited Chilean leftist sources as alleging that Chilean extreme rightists "generously supported from the outside" have not eschewed their coupist plans and that "the danger of civil war remains very real." It concluded, however, that Chilean workers were prepared "to repulse any reactionary attempts to foil revolutionary changes."

HAVANA There has been very little Cuban comment on the elections thus far--a limited reaction that may be related to Havana's fundamental skepticism about elections in general and more specifically to its reservations about the feasibility of Allende's effort to build socialism within the confines of a "bourgeois" system. Last September Castro had

been embarrassed by foreign press reports that he had privately alleged that the Chileans would have to abandon "bourgeois legality" if their revolution was to progress. While he strongly denied the reports, they appear consistent with his views on revolution in Latin America.

Havana's initial reaction was by domestic TV commentator Jose Maria Gonzalez Jerez on the 5th in an analysis of the Chilean and French elections. Both contests, he alleged, demonstrated the victory of the people, their radicalization, and their clearcut move toward the left--a characteristic of this nascent post-Vietnam phase. Observing that opposition efforts to gain the necessary two-thirds control of the Senate for Allende's impeachment "fell flat," Gonzalez Jerez hailed the election result as "a splendid battle won by the people," one that "sets up more favorable conditions" for the UP to implement its program.

The only other monitored Cuban commentary, by PRENSA LATINA correspondent Pedro Lobaina, examined the results of the senatorial races in Santiago province and their implications for the 1976 presidential contest. In a Santiago-dated line dispatch on 6 March, Lobaina noted that former Chilean President and leading Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei was the chief voter--getter among the senatorial candidates--the opposition captured three out of the five of the senate seats at stake in the province--and concluded that he had "emerged as the possible candidate for the right" in the 1976 presidential elections. While noting that of the two victorious UP candidates the Chilean Communist Party's (PCC) representative had garnered slightly more votes than that of the Socialist Party (PS), he declared that it was "still premature" to forecast who the left's presidential candidate would be. Lobaina concluded that emergence of "a clear majority" for either the PCC or the PS would "undoubtedly" influence the choice of Allende's successor. PRENSA LATINA on the 5th had carried a PS Political Commission statement declaring that the election had resulted in the party's maintaining "its position in the foremost political force in the UP."

Lobaina's commentary was unusual, since Havana has only rarely acknowledged the sharp political rivalry between the two major elements in the UP coalition. Although PRENSA LATINA correspondents in Santiago have reported to Havana in great detail on policy and ideological conflict between the PCC and Allende on the one hand and the more radical PS and extremist leftist Revolutionary Movement (MIR) on the other, these reports have rarely appeared in Cuban media, presumably because of Castro's desire to avoid any impression of interference in the internal politics of his closest ally in the hemisphere.

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The only available Havana commentary on the Internationale pre-election conflict was by Lobaina on 8 February. Reporting the adoption of the UP political platform after "two weeks of intensive debate on tactics," he noted that "discrepancies among the ruling parties arose over differing priorities," without spelling out the positions of either party, he indicated that the PCC regarded the consolidation of existing gains and the improvement of the efficiency in state-run industries as a "key task." The PS argued that "top priority" must be given to enlarging the "socially owned" sector of the economy. While noting that top PCC and PS leaders, "in a unity gesture," had sat alongside Allende at a political rally, Lobaina implied that the modus vivendi might not survive the elections. The new UP platform, he charged, "does not define the issues of the recent polemics." The document, he went on to say, "appears to demonstrate, rather, the desire of the UP parties to keep discrepancies from going any further with just a short time to go before the crucial parliamentary

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TITO STRESSES CLOSER TIES WITH MOSCOW, CONTINUED NONALIGNMENT

More cordial relations with the Soviet Union, along with steadfast adherence to the nonalignment policy, were underscored by Tito in a lengthy interview published in the 23 February issue of VESNIK, the authoritative Zagreb daily of the Socialist Alliance of Working People (SAWP) of Croatia. The interview, which also included remarks on Belgrade's relations with the People's Republic of China and the United States, stated clear of the internal situation—still marked by a continuing purge of "liberal" elements, the latest victims being the top three officials of the SAWP of Serbia.

The Yugoslav President was interviewed by VESNIK editor Dara Janekovic on Brioni on 5 February, but the interview was not publicized until the 21st when the TANjug domestic service carried the text, published in identical form in VESNIK two days later. After discussing Vietnam, Europe, and the Middle East ("the USSR has a right to be interested in the Middle East situation"), Tito stressed that Belgrade's cooperation with the Soviet Union was increasing, mainly in the economic realm. "Since our relations with the Soviet Union improved several years ago," he noted, "our economic cooperation has developed constantly." He added that the USSR "is now in third place, and it could soon be in first place in our trade with foreign countries." Alluding to the Soviet loan granted to Belgrade last November, Tito remarked that "as for the credits, who else would give us half a billion dollars or even more than that—600 to 700 million?" and added that the amount would increase to a billion within a year or two. The USSR, he remarked, is also a valuable market for Yugoslav goods which cannot be sold in Western markets.

Tito made it clear that the bad feelings aroused by the 1968 Czechoslovak crisis no longer stand in the way of improved Moscow-Belgrade relations, noting that "what happened in Czechoslovakia has been forgotten" although Yugoslavia's disagreement with the intervention is well-known. "The Soviet Union is not at war anywhere," he added, praising the USSR's "pacification" course and its "enormous" support for liberation movements in Vietnam and elsewhere.

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